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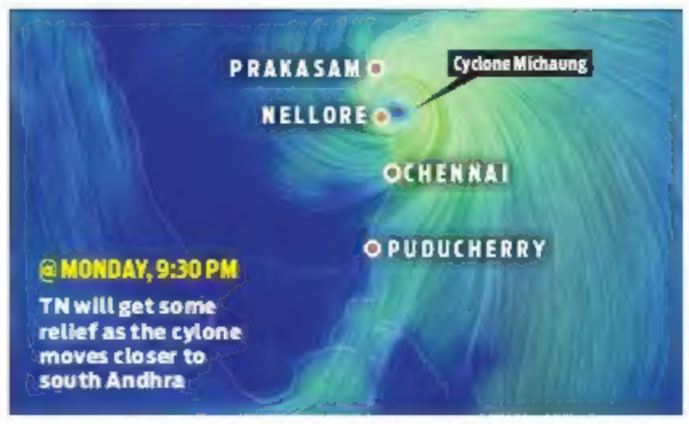

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MICHAUNG MAULS CHENNAI

● CITY RECEIVES CUMULATIVE 43CM SINCE SUNDAY ● RESIDENTS FLOUNDER AMID HEAVY INUNDATION, POWER OUTAGES ● ARMY, RESCUE TEAMS EVACUATE HUNDREDS FROM SUBURBS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

THE horror of 2015 floods returned on Monday with the slow-moving severe cyclonic storm Michaung pounding Chennai and its neighbouring districts with extremely heavy rainfall spells for the past 48 hours. At least eight people died in rain-related incidents as the city received a cumulative rainfall of a record 43cm from 8.30 am on Sunday to 5.30 pm on Monday. Some estimates put this figure as worse than the 2015 downpour that, along with reservoir releases, sank the city. Normalcy is expected to return on Tuesday after the rain eases, officials said.

However, on Monday few roads remained fully motorable, and many places experienced power outages despite the best efforts of the Chennai Corporation and other government agencies. The state government has announced that Tuesday too will be a public holiday in the worst-affected districts of Tiruvallur, Chennai, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu.

Air passengers found themselves stranded at the Chennai airport as five flights were cancelled and 23 diverted due to gale winds and an inundated runway. Telecommunications also took a hit as telephone exchanges blanked out due to power outages. At least 40 express trains connecting Chennai Central to Coimbatore, Bengaluru, Mangaluru, and Tirupati were cancelled due to waterlogging on tracks, with suburban train operations disrupted across all sections. Tracks submerged at Tambaram resulted in the cancellation of around 20 trains bound for southern Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which operated from Chennai Egmore.

Chief Minister MK Stalin, taking stock of the situation, described the rains that lashed the coastal districts as unprecedented. Stating that the state government is undertaking relief and rescue operations on a war-footing, he urged all political parties and volunteers to help the government overcome the natural disaster.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah telephoned the CM and assured that all assistance will be provided by the Government of India. The CM explained the impact of the cyclone on Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu districts and requested deployment of additional NDRF forces. Once assessment of rain damage is done, appropriate aid will be sought from the union government, he told Shah.

One of the primary reasons for the unprecedented flooding, despite the state undertaking several measures, including regulated discharge of surplus water from the reservoirs, is that storm that stayed close to the Chennai coast and virtually blocked the city rivers from discharging flood waters into the sea. Meanwhile, Chennai police and Indian Army personnel, aside from disaster response personnel, rescued hundreds of stranded people from West Mambalam, Mugalivakkam and Manapakkam as well as other parts.

With the Water Resources Department discharging 1,000 cusecs of surplus water from the Chembarambakkam lake every half hour, after the lake reached maximum storage, residents in low-lying areas were alerted, and rescue teams from Kancheepuram were taking steps to evacuate citizens. Similarly, residents near the Poondi reservoir were alerted as the WRD discharged 17,000 cusecs from the facility.

KILPAUK

AIRPORT

VELACHERY

People moving out of low-lying areas in Kilpauk; the inundated runway of the Chennai airport; Residents at Ram Nagar | SHIBA PRASAD SAHU & ASHWIN PRASATH

CHENNAI deluge

TRANSPORT

TRAINS CANCELLED AS TRACKS UNDER WATER

Over 40 express trains connecting Chennai Central to Coimbatore, Bengaluru, Mangaluru, and Tirupati were cancelled due to waterlogging on tracks. Tracks submerged at Tambaram resulted in cancellation of 20 trains bound for South TN & Kerala from Chennai Egmore

FLIGHTS

CHENNAI AIRPORT CLOSES, OPS TO RESUME TODAY

Chennai Airport closed its airfield from 9.17am to 11pm on Monday. Five flights departing from Chennai were cancelled and 23 flights, prior to the shutting down of airfield. The arrival of two flights was also cancelled. Operations are likely to resume at 9am Tuesday

RESCUE

5K STAFF FROM REST OF TN ROPED IN; 1.8K IN SHELTERS

According to Municipal Administration minister KN Nehru, 5,000 workers are called from other districts. Around 1,500 of them will deployed in Chennai. Around 1,845 people are accomodated in relief centres and more people are being evacuated from flood-affected areas

STAY HOME

PUBLIC HOLIDAY TODAY IN CHENNAI, 3 NEARBY DISTS

Amid the heavy rainfall and inundation in several parts of Chennai, Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Chengalpattu, the state government has announced a public holiday for Tuesday as well. Firms have been asked to let staff work from home

daCunha/AB/918

Didi raps Cong, to skip Dec 6 I.N.D.I.A meeting

PRONAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

EVEN as West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday lit into the Congress leadership for letting the BJP gain psychological advantage ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, sources said she would not attend the Opposition INDIA bloc's meeting scheduled for December 6. Even her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, who is part of INDIA's 14-member coordination committee, is likely to skip the meet citing prior engagements.

Speaking at the state assembly, Mamata faulted the Congress for fighting polls in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan on its own, which resulted in fragmentation of Opposition votes and benefited the BJP. She said the Congress lost all three states due to lack of seat-sharing arrangements with other the members of the INDIA bloc. It was a "defeat of Congress, not the people", she emphasised.

"Congress secured victory in Telengana. They would have won Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Rajasthan, too, had the votes of INDIA's allies not split. We had suggested seat-sharing with the allies but it did not take place. The Congress lost because of division of anti-BJP votes. Along with ideology, you need to have a strategy," she said.

Going forward, the INDIA bloc will learn lessons and work together before the next general elections to rectify the mistake, she said. Mamata's remarks appeared to rule out the possibility of Trinamool's seat-sharing with the Congress in Bengal.

EXPRESS READ

Kharge may decide CLP leader: Cong TS MLAs

HYDERABAD: A meeting of the newly-elected Congress MLAs in Telangana on Monday resolved to authorise AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge to appoint the leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP). P5

'Discuss expulsion report before decision on Mahua'

NEW DELHI: Opposition members on Monday demanded a discussion in the Lok Sabha on the Ethics Committee report recommending the expulsion of TMC member Mahua Moitra before any decision on the matter.

Aides of min's brother allegedly stab BJP man

BELAGAVI: A follower of former BJP minister Ramesh Jarkiholi was stabbed and injured allegedly by aides of Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar's brother Channaraj Hattiholi, here on Monday. P6

New kid ZPM turns giant killer

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

THE Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), floated with six regional parties five years ago, upset the Mizo National Front (MNF) apple cart in the Mizoram assembly elections, results for which were announced on Monday.

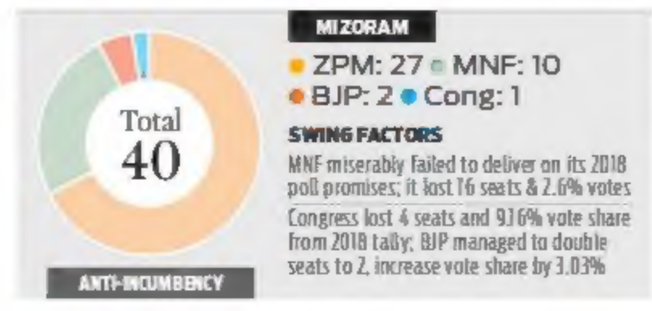
But not many in the state are surprised. With the ruling MNF going to polls with a bagful of failures, the Congress' popularity waning, and BJP fighting its anti-Christian image, ZPM became voters' natural choice.

Also, the Mizos have already experimented with MNF and Congress, both of which have ruled the state multiple times. So, the chorus this time was for a change.

ZPM also got it right in its choice of candidates. Thirty-three of its 40 contestants were new faces — many of them reputed figures. In a novel strategy that endeared voters, they all made a commitment publicly that they would not take bribes.

The MNF had fallen from grace for failing to fulfil most of its 2018 poll promises. Burning issues were also aplenty: unemployment, corruption, nepotism, underdevelopment, and rising drug menace. Its downfall was accentuated by its failure to properly implement its flagship programme. During the 2018 elections, MNF promised ₹3 lakh to each beneficiary of Socio-Economic Development Programme, but it gave only ₹50,000. There were allegations that MNF workers pocketed a big chunk of the fund.

MNF leader and CM Zoramthanga's bid to get political mileage from the violence in Manipur and the unrest in Myanmar also backfired. His government sheltered 12,000 displaced Kukis from Manipur and 35,000 fleeing Chins from Myanmar. Mizos, Kukis and Chins are ethnic cousins. Their plight is an emotive issue in the state, but the Mizos rejected the party.


Total
40
ANTI-INCUMBENCY
MIZORAM
ZPM: 27 MNF: 10
BJP: 2 Cong: 1
SWING FACTORS
MNF miserably failed to deliver on its 2018 poll promises; it lost 76 seats & 2.6% votes
Congress lost 4 seats and 9.16% vote share from 2018 tally; BJP managed to double seats to 2, increase vote share by 3.03%

Wild tusker kills howdah jumbo Arjuna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hassan/Bengaluru

ONE of the most popular and preferred tuskers of the Karnataka Forest Department, also called the royal tusker or the howdah elephant - Arjuna – died on the spot on Monday morning during a kumkhi (wild elephant rescue) operation in Hassan.

Experts, veterinarians and forest officials said while attacks on camp elephants are reported across India, the death of an elephant when attacked by a wild tusker is not common. Such an incident has not been reported in the last 20 years or so. Questioning the operation, experts pointed out that the Wildlife Protection Act permits shooting an animal in self-defence, and in this incident, the wild tusker could have been shot when it attacked the camp elephant. P5

Yogeeshwar's kin found murdered

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru/Mysuru

FORMER minister and BJP MLC CP Yogeeshwara's brother-in-law, who had gone missing from his farmhouse in Channapatna three days ago, was found murdered on Monday. The decomposed body of the 62-year-old realtor-cum-businessman, P Mahadevaiah, was found on the forest fringes of Male Mahadeshwara Wildlife division in Chamarajanagar district. The police have formed four teams to crack the kidnap and murder case.

Mahadevaiah, one of the directors of Megacity (Bangalore) Developers and Builders Ltd (MBDL), reportedly went missing from his farmhouse at Vaddaradoddi in Channapatna taluk on Saturday. The police traced his abandoned car near the Primary Health Centre at Ramapura with traces of blood on the rear of the car on Sunday. After the car was found, MLC Yogeeshwara visited the spot. On Monday afternoon, his body was found about 6 km from the place where the car was found. "The assailants have bludgeoned the victim and have murdered him by smashing his head with a boulder," the police said. P5